



## STATE OF MICHIGAN

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### **Sen. Allen, Rep. Hansen introduce legislation to protect students**

**LANSING** – Parents will be more at ease with the people helping educate their children under legislation, introduced today by Sen. Jason Allen and Rep. Goeff Hansen, implementing criminal background checks of paraprofessional job applicants.

Senate Bill 247 and House Bill 4402 require a school district, intermediate school district, school academy or nonpublic school perform a criminal background check of applicants for jobs that provide special education services to students.

“Paraprofessionals develop such a close connection with students,” said Allen, R-Traverse City. “I’m sure parents want to know their children, particularly those with added needs, can learn in a safe, positive environment.”

“Current law mandates background checks for teachers and administrators, but there’s a gap in that law because other personnel working directly with our children are not included,” said Hansen, R-Hart. “Para-pros are an integral part of our education system, helping students who sometimes need more classroom attention than one teacher can provide.”

The legislation was prompted by situations in both legislators’ districts where an individual with a prior criminal record was able to obtain employment as a paraprofessional working in special education.

“Parents should not have to worry about whether individuals working with their children are predators,” Allen said. “This legislation will help prevent these predators from preying on our children in special education programs.”

“Extending the background check to include special education paraprofessionals strengthens the security measures already in place to protect children,” Hansen said. “Violent criminals should not be allowed to work in the education system.”

The background checks required for special education paraprofessionals under the proposed legislation are the same as currently required before hiring a teacher or school administrator.

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